

Doyle Moore: DM
Tracie Wilson: TW

TW: This is Tracie Wilson, I'm in Champaign, Illinois on June 4th. I'm interviewing Doyle Moore at his home on Green Street.

DM: At two in the afternoon.

TW: Yes, exactly. Maybe a little later in fact. Okay, so maybe I'll just start with a very general question, and we can go from there. So why don't you tell me a little bit about your background and how you became interested in traditional music.

DM: You're wanting a dissertation then aren't you?

TW: Yes, it's a broad question.

DM: Well, then my background is fairly simple. I was born in Oklahoma, raised in Oklahoma and Kansas, back and forth and back and forth and back and forth. I went to 13 schools in the 12 years of grade school, and ended up in California, and then back through Salt Lake City and then Denver, and then back to Oklahoma, and then finally by that time it was time to go to college. I graduated from Southwest Kansas in Garden City in 1948, and just, not bumming around, we would move and travel, every year I would go to a different school. So that was sort of interesting, I always thought it was interesting; my friends would say, 'How could you possibly have gotten an education when you were uprooted so much?' But I never thought of it as a problem, I always thought of it as an enrichment, because I was going someplace and doing something. So I came back and started college, I got a scholarship to college, and of course I promptly lost that after the first year. I was on a scholarship to Friends University in Wichita, Kansas and then I moved to Kansas State College, then 'college' it's now Kansas State University, and I majored in architecture. No real reason why, other than I had always liked drafting and mechanical drawing, and I was very good in a class of analytic geometry and mechanical drawing, so I thought architecture, well that's where you learn how to draw houses, I guess I'll go learn about that; no real information other than, well that's what I'm gonna do, so I did that. I was at KK State for four years, and I did not succeed very well at applied mechanics, strength of materials, and all those kinds of courses, but I did excel in art.

So naturally I flunked out and lost my deferment from the military, and had the choice of either being enlisted or drafted, and so I enlisted in the Air Force for four years, rather than being drafted into the Army for two years. And then I went to San Francisco, and straight from there to Japan, and finished my four years, and ended up there being the art director for the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper. I worked in a secret intelligence organization, drafting and drawing things and people. I was going down this road and I saw this tree, and I saw that fence, and there were two buildings here and there were five children there, and I would plot those out. And that was kind of interesting, although boring in the long run, I was intrigued with the idea of communication in that way.

So I came back to finish school, and I got right back into K State as a GI, and I was in architecture for five more minutes. I went back to that class that I had failed, and

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he said “Easy, the elasticity of the module of an I-beam,” and I quietly picked up my books and left. I said, ‘That is it. I knew four years ago that I shouldn’t have been here. I know for sure now.’ So for a short time I was taking a degree in interior decoration, because architecture didn’t know anything about interior dec and interior dec didn’t know anything about architecture. So I said, well take them both and you’ll get what you want to do this. But when I went over to go talk to the head of interior dec, I’ve known her all of my academic life there, she said, ‘I wish you wouldn’t do this, this is home economics and you’d have to take food, and family finance, and courses that you do not want to take in order to finish your degree in interior dec.’ So she called the head of liberal arts, and I think at that time that it what was we would now call it, an independent plan of study. It had not yet been invented in 1956, it was not invented. And so I think that we invented, because my degree is a B.S. in humanities, with an art and painting option, majoring in Interior Decorating, with forty hours of architecture. You know, I mean it covered everything; so I all I had to do was take some French, and a little English Literature, two courses in psychology, and I had finished all of the required work for it, and I degree in a year and a half.

While I was there I met two former students from the University of Iowa, and of course they leaned heavily on me and said I had to go get a Masters degree, and so I went to the University of Iowa, and I instantly was a graduate assistant and taught the courses in architecture and graphic design, believe it or not, for Iowa, and then came here. I hadn’t yet gotten my degree, but I came here and was teaching in 1959. So I would go back every year, every summer, and take more courses and more courses, but what am I gonna do for a degree. So that’s how I got here, and found out about all this that was going on. So, if I came here in ’59 and was here for a about three years, ’62, maybe ’61, what do you have as the date for the beginning of the campus folksong club?

TW: Well the first newsletters were from ’61.

DM: They were in ’61, yes. And I don’t know exactly how I got involved with Archie, well I guess it would have been through, well it involves two of my students. At the time I was teaching graphic design here, and they were industrial design students, and they were in my courses that were required by their curriculum, I had to teach them. And I’m not certain how we might have gotten straightened out on things, or whether we ended up going to certain things, but people like Peggy Seeger and Ewan McColl came here and I was fascinated by that because I saw Peggy Seeger play the autoharp, and then one of the boys, Paul Adkins, had gone to New York for one reason or another, and he was wild about the New Lost City Ramblers, and no one had seen them, I mean no one knew what they were, that was ’60-’61. And somehow he came back and he wanted to build an autoharp, and I said, I think it’s easier to buy one from Montgomery Wards, the first one I bought was from Montgomery Wards. And I decided that I wanted to play it. Now in the time that I was a graduate student in Iowa, I was learning to play the recorder, so I got interested in recorder music and baroque music, and that sort of thing, but it was all by myself and that didn’t work well. I’d always thought that playing by one’s self was unusual, and I had a penchant toward music, and all of a sudden to be able to make the

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music is kind of interesting. Well, we got together in '61 and we were always a part of the campus folksong club, and it grew to 400, we had 400 members in that organization. In 1962, Archie thought it would be a good idea to make a record, and so that's where the Philo, Glee and Mandolin Society record came from, and these two boys and I got together as a group, and I played the autoharp and Paul played the guitar, and Jim played the violin and the mandolin, and he played the guitar a little bit. I don't know if he played the guitar with us at all, he was always more of the mandolin and violin. He wanted to fiddle and right now, I just spoke to him a week ago, he is the national, oh not national, he is the regional champion, or state champion in Oregon. He is the champion fiddler in Oregon. I thought that was pretty nifty.

TW: So, he's in Oregon? What was his last name?

DM: Hockenhull. James Langley Hockenhull.

TW: Because, I was talking to Fritz Plous,

DM: Oh yes.

TW: And I mentioned that I was going to be talking to you, and he asked me about your other partners.

DM: Oh yes, that's Paul Adkins. Paul was from, oh, where's Superman from? Ha ha, I'm losing words.

TW: Oh, not Metropolis?

DM: Yes, Metropolis. He was from Metropolis, Illinois.

TW: That's down near Carbondale?

DM: Yes, that's way down south, near the river, next to the Ohio River. And it is not nearly, I think, quite west of Carbondale, but it's near there, Metropolis. So then, the interest in the music really came from hearing some of these things, as I say, Peggy Seeger, and Mike Seeger, and the New Lost City Ramblers were here. And we just all went absolutely crazy over the music, it was all, this is so, it's, what do I want to say, it's something that you can all immediately be involved with. It's years and years of doing this and years and years of doing that and that and this. It was available. As soon as you started playing, and of course, our want to play was just to play. And so we'd always laugh because somebody would ask, "Well, who sings the melody?" And we'd say, "The person who first learns the song has to pick whatever harmony they will pick to sing that melody." And so we got very close playing with ourselves, but there was no idea of stardom. It was a real gestalt of how we all fit together, and I'm afraid that we were a little naughty because we wouldn't allow people to play with us, because no one was as

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good, really and truly. Because they would all come in and they would want to be a showoff, and pretend and that kind of thing, and we were all interested in the act of making this personal music, not a personal expression, but rather a personal aesthetic. We were not interested in expressing ourselves, we were enjoying what we could do and we did it rather well. And excluded people, you know, jamming was not something that we wanted to do, even though we played together every night for hours. But jamming and getting other people.

There was one exception to that, it was Nate Bray. Nate Bray was a guitar player with his brothers, here in the county, and they were a real string band of a sort that did country and western music. And Nate Bray, he was such a good player and he was quiet, so we could continue to make that aesthetic felt. Sing it from the heart, and just sing it; don't stage it, don't grand stand it, and don't do anything extra, just stand there and sing. And I think that's probably our secret, if there was a secret, because we were very very popular and we could just sing for hours. So whatever we would get on the stage, we controlled what we were doing, there wasn't any, "Oh gosh, I don't know what I am supposed to do here." You know, just shut up and sing. Just do it, and they'll listen to it and enjoy it, and you know, we'll all be happy. So it lacked anything other than a kind of personal aesthetic passion, and I think that's what we did the most.

Now I was living right over here a couple of blocks, and then I moved to Philo. That would have been in '61, that's when we got together. And Jim Hockenhull had read in one of the Illini yearbooks about the University of Illinois Glee and Mandolin Society, and we thought that was a real funny name. And of course, what was a real funny name at the time was duh-rig-er at that particular time, and we thought that the New Lost City Ramblers was a funny name. And when we began to find the funnier names like Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers, and Dave Macon and the Fruit Jar Drinkers, and names and things like that, it just seemed natural. And well, so we're the Philo, Glee, and Mandolin Society, and we allowed to be called PGMS, but we never would allow the "And now the Philo's!" No, we are not the Philo's, and if anyone introduced us to the folksong club that, I certainly remember I straightened them, I corrected them, "We're the Philo, Glee and Mandolin Society." And so, of course we'd get a chuckle at that. But that's where the name came from, and why it happened, it has a nice mellifluous sound, and it sounds about as complex and amusing as our music was.

We liked singing the songs, and then with that Archie Green then, this is the part that I love the most, the New Lost City Ramblers, Mike was a little anxious that we were coming up and going to be competition for them. And we quit that information after about thirty days when he realized that we were not out to take his places and all that, and he became a very close friend. Because we would have a lot to do, I began to make record covers for Folkways Records. I did, at that particular time, I did a great number of Folkways' records, and especially those that were produced by Mike Seeger, and my pay for that was, I got a copy of the record. But I didn't care because my response to graphic design or whatever it was, was they're only things to teach me more about myself. So I'm not in to make the money, but there is money to be made. Some of my students have gone off to be very significant record album cover-makers. But I was only doing it because Mike was kind to me or to us, and I could do this. So, I made a lot of record

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covers for Moash and the Folkways records, and I sort of took a pride to that as something that I could do, and not worry about. So, we kept playing. The boys changed their major and both became sculpture majors, they graduated after a period of time. Jim went off to Iowa and got an advanced degree in Iowa, and Paul got married and went back south, but he continues to play. His current wife and he play just around their area near Edwardsville? What's over near St. Louis, on the Illinois side over related to the University of Illinois? Isn't it Edwardsville?

TW: Yes.

DM: It is? I think that he lives near Edwardsville. I haven't had any contact with him for several years, but that's where he's at. So, the interest in folk music came from an aesthetic appreciation of what we were listening to, and then also we were getting some very good sociological information from Archie. He wasn't approaching it as pop form, yes there was the Kingston Trio, and Peter, Paul and Mary and all of that was happening at the same time, but he steered us to paying attention to the indigenous music. Because he also pointed out that that's what these popular music groups were trying to do, revive the indigenous music. So we got, through Archie, we got exactly the same record source that the New Lost City Ramblers had from Gene Earle, who had a huge collection of 30s string band music. And so we would get constant recordings from them and we would learn the songs, and he would put them on, and we would keep going. It was sort of just give us some more food, and we will continue to do all this. And then they decided to make this recording; it was done in Guy's front room.

So now we get down to something that I think is kind of interesting anyway, I still had not gotten my MFA from Iowa. What am I going to write for a thesis? What am I gonna do for a thesis? Meanwhile, Archie Green encouraged me to, because I was going to the American Folklore Society, and enjoyed hanging around those people, and I enjoyed what I was doing, and I enjoyed the company of all those people and I enjoyed going to the meetings and hearing all the history and such. So Archie says, "Why don't you write the history of the autoharp?" So, I got busy and started writing the history of the autoharp, and I went to Dolgeville, New York and to the library, and the Oscar Schmidt people. I hunted down anything that I could find. Now I was not much of a researcher, but anyway I did it, and got all of the information I could get, and proceeded to write the piece on the history of the autoharp, and.... Can you get up it's in this middle drawer, and I think right there are some papers, the loose ones, are some books, that might be it right there. What does it say?

TW: The Autoharp?

DM: Yes, there's a print of the article, and what happened was, I wrote this and then read the paper at the folklore society, and then the head of the folklore of upstate New York wanted to publish it, so Archie said, "Let them do it." And so we got reprints and made an edition of this little brochure here, but now here's the funny part, what I think is the funny part. Archie literally taught me how to write, I wrote the thing, I wrote it and

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wrote it and wrote it, and then he went through and edited it and it absolutely just started falling together so beautifully, and I saw what it was he was doing, so in a way I learned how to write an expository piece, by making sure you make lists of at least three things. It was technique. Well I got this done, I got it published, and then all of a sudden I knew what it was. And so I went back to Iowa, and I go, "I want to write my thesis, I've gotta get my degree. They think I have my degree here." I said I've got to do that, and I saw my Northern Renaissance Art History teacher, whom I liked very much, I was a good student for him. And I said, here's what I want to do, I want to write about the fact that form does not necessarily follow function, because that's a big design concept, "Form Follows Function." Function gives form to all of this. So I all of a sudden realized that, wait just a minute, I had just written the history of the autoharp that says, it started out one day as a musical instrument to teach children harmonies, and it was used in schools, and it was picked up by some folk, who began to play it. And they adapted their music to the sound of the autoharp.

And I knew everybody who played the autoharp at that time, especially Mike Seeger, Maybelle Carter, and Maybelle Carter had a unique style, and all of a sudden you find out that the sensibility of the music that was being played and being heard, was totally different than the school harmonies that the instrument was originally designed for. Parlor ballads, it was the 1890s, so, parlor ballads, school singings and such things was not where they captured the autoharp and carried it into the music. And so that's what the content of this article is how it changed then into a folk instrument. Well, as soon as I came here then from Iowa, I went to D.W. Gotshalk, who taught the Philosophy of Art here, in the Philosophy Department. His *Art in the Social Order*, a book, explains everything has four dimensions: experience, form, function and expression. So if you can divide everything into materials, experience, form, function, and expression, you will have 100% of the energy that a piece of art can contain. Then, if you modulate any one of those, it affects something else. If you say, well, I would like to do this drawing but not in beet and gold, but on ink and canvas, well fine you didn't change the subject matter, you didn't change what you were doing, but you did change the materials so the form had to change in order to get an expression. So I just love that bit about, if you change something, then something else has got to change. Well I saw that the autoharp changed its function, thereby changing its expression, without changing its materials or its form. And I was absolutely delighted because form does not follow function. So the function changed, and it did not alter the form at all, it altered the expression.

So I put six pages in the front, explaining that phenomenon that form follows function, and the fact that schools of design's have philosophies, and then included an my work, and then an end that showed that I proved that form did not follow function. And this is the part that just really tickles the daylights out of me, I wrote all of that, and I sent it to my professor, and I said if everything works out alright, I am going to go to Europe and I am going to go to Antwerp, and I will see, not the Lambert Brothers, I cant say the name right now, a very significant Northern Renaissance artwork that I wanted to see, because I thought it was very wonderful to see. So I sent it to him, and I thought, well, okay here goes, and in not very long, it all came back. And I read the letter from him and it says, "Herein lies the bloody corpse of your thesis. Call in page 1 through 6 Chapter 1,

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and call the rest of it Chapter 2, and the end Chapter 3. Then get on the plane and go to Antwerp.” He didn’t change one word, not anything, so I immediately gave it to a friend of mine, who typed it up correctly and sent it in. And it’s funny because later on, people would ask me, “How come you got a Musicology degree from the Art Department?” And I’d say, I didn’t get a Musicology degree, I got a degree in MFA and Design. “But you wrote a musicology thesis?” And I’d say, you didn’t read the thesis did you? Because if you saw when I said, now this is what happens, this is the way, and I will use this study, which is all original, and it proves this is what happens, and therefore I have proved it. That’s a thesis, that says “This is.” So you see everything is all mixing up by this time. I indeed got my degree and came back, and they indeed thought I had received it three years before. But, that’s alright, and our interest in the autoharp lead to my writing of the history, and then my design philosophy, and I put all that together, and it just keeps going after that. I don’t know if that’s the dissertation you wanted, but that explains pretty much all of it, all the parts that at least got us through 1964.

TW: So, do you remember how you came, what were the other two members of your group were involved with the club?

DM: Oh goodness yes, we were the club.

TW: Okay, so, you were there from the beginning?

DM: We were there from the very thought, “You print the tickets and I’ll get the curtain, and we’ll do it here.” No, we were all, it all grew from those little flashes that came around us, and then it all came at once, we came at the same time that the folksong club came. And we really ended up being the major contributors to it. We would do 20 or 25 minutes every night that we were on, other people would come and sing two or three songs, while we would sing 30 minutes and they wanted more. So, we were supported by Archie, and all of the people who were doing the mechanics of making the structure work, you know, making sure this was done and that was done and making sure who was there that was supposed to be there. Our contribution, mainly, was just keep the music going. And then I ended up doing all of the posters for all of the people that we would bring, we were the first, the campus folksong club, was the first academic unit to invite Flatt and Skruggs. They had done music festivals and of course they had their own repertoire of places where they played, you know Flatt and Skruggs. But they were here at the University, and it was just amazing. You know, I would hear, “What are we doing here? You know, here we are out on a stage, giving in a performance, when we’re used to being in a nightclub or a bar, you know, less people whooping and hollering.” And then all of a sudden they got very revered attention from people who were very interested in their music. And then that developed into the fact that they were then later invited to things like the Chicago Folk Festival and to Ash- Ash? Something in California, Ashgrove? It was another big venue for folksingers, so they got to do that. And then another group that we did was Pop Stoneman and his family, and I had, not in this house, but in another house, I had Veronica and Donna Stoneman for an afternoon in my house.

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And they were just like, “We’re in a University professor’s house?” You know, it was as though, “What is happening, this has never happened before.” And they were delighted, you know this was long before Hee-Haw, did you ever see Hee-Haw?

TW: When I was a little kid.

DM: Do you remember Ronnie, he was the hillbilly with the pigtailed and the blackened teeth. You know, that was Veronica, and she was a banjo player that could not end. And for a little time, Donna, she was the other sister, she wore Go-Go Boots, and she danced while she played the mandolin, because she could not sit still while she played. So, she was absolutely unique in doing dancing, very much like some of the fiddle players in Nova Scotia who jig and dance while they fiddle, she was doing the same thing with the mandolin, and it was very exciting. So, let’s see was that before or after, because that was when I went and interviewed Pop Stoneman in Washington DC. I interviewed him, and Veronica and Donna were there, and the two brothers. And Pop Stoneman told, what I think was an awful funny joke. He had 24 children and they were all musicians, so the Stoneman Family was the Stoneman family, and Pop played the autoharp, and played it on his lap. And he set the autoharp on top of this box, and it vibrated more on top of his box, but he played the autoharp this way. So, I was interested, and I made an appointment to meet him, and I went to Washington DC, and he was in a little Maryland bar, and so I got to meet them, and I think I went to their home, and got to meet various numbers of the people. But Pop Stoneman would always say, “Well, you know this is my family. I’ve got 24 kids. You know, growing up, I’d say to my wife, course she was hard of hearing. I’d say do you want to go to bed or do you want to what? And she’d say, ‘What?’.” And so, that’s just, you know, hillbilly humor, and so everyone would get a chuckle out of that. And they had 24 children. And they were very famous, they were on the \$64,000 question and that was before it was found out that it was fake and all that. So you see, I interviewed Pop Stoneman, and then I interviewed Maybelle Carter in Flatt and Skrugger’s front room, using his recording equipment. I loved that. And then I got to thinking about you, and this, and we made our record in ’62. How many years ago is that now?

TW: 45 years?

DM: Yeah 45 years. And I was recalling then that Bill and Earl Bolick, the Blue Sky Boys, and Archie arranged for us to interview them. And it was less time from their 1942 recording, to our interviewing them in 1962 or 3, less time from our record and then your interview.

TW: Wow.

DM: I’ve always thought that was kind of miraculous. And well, it just continues. When the boys left, I never, oh, I tried to play with other people and they were okay, but we didn’t connect. We just, I mean those guys, Paul and Jim, we really connected. I

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mean we literally could tune out everything else and just shut up and play. And then when I would try to play with other people, well in the first place, a lot of them just didn't understand the music, and they really didn't have any other aesthetic of the music other than what the subject matter was about. And we were playing with harmonies and how do you manufacture this music so that it stays solid? And then not trying, because we were deeply caught up with the idea of "Are you a singer of folksongs? Or are you a folksinger?" And we had to admit that for the most part, all of us were singers of folksongs, even though most of us had come from a background that was rural, we all had music in our families somewhere. My mother, my uncle, my great-uncle, and my grandfather played the fiddle in Oklahoma, and my aunt would dance, and they would go to barn dances and they would play the fiddle, and nobody in my immediate family was interested in music, and you know Jim had backgrounds of people playing, oh and I had an uncle who played the mandolin.

And Archie was always saying he was impressed by that because he only played four songs over and over. And then, one time he quit playing the mandolin, because you could get a record and play a record player and that's a part of this movement of the music, away from back porches to popular form. So we all kind of had an awareness. When I was talking to Jim the other day, he laughed and he said, I remember when we were learning a song or something, he kept saying, "Well, this is just hillbilly music!" instead of "This is just folk music." This is just hillbilly music, we loved playing it. And it was never as a means of imitating the burlesque of imitating the hillbilly music, but presenting the, what's the song that we sing? "The Baby Cries"? [Phone rings]. My oh my. It gives you a hint of what we did, and you can hear what made the body of the music rather than personalities, because there's no personalities in that, when Paul sings "Baby Oh" he sings it like Gid Tanner in the high falsetto. So I had to sing bass on that one, because he wanted to sing in that real funny high voice, so he'd sing it, I don't care. We had fun with what we were doing, it was good.

TW: And so you said you think the last time you played together was around '67.

DM: Probably, yeah yeah.

TW: And that was a few years after they graduated?

DM: Yeah, because Jim was in Iowa, and I think that we might have done one concert with just Jim and me only.

TW: So, one other thing that I was wondering about, what was, in your mind, what was the role that the club played at the U of I?

DM: Well, a real good term for that would be alternative music, and here's what I mean by that, if the popular music was Peter, Paul and Mary who came here, and we had a big party at my house with Peter, Paul and Mary, and if the alternative music was Peter, Paul, and Mary and the Kingston Trio and the Christie Minstrels, and what was the other

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group, not a quartet, there was another group who sang, or that was Kingston Trio who sang "Tom Dooley." And who's the woman that was so good, South American, wasn't she? Very popular, well that was mainstream pop, and we were allowing people to hear this hillbilly aesthetic along with traditional singers that we brought here. We didn't bring Mother Jones, but we brought her sister, and we brought Jimmy Driftwood and one of the women that was in his community that sang, she sang ballads. And so what we were doing was we were giving them a real entrée into traditional American music, rather than popular performance.

And the club did that, because the club would bring these people because we had Norman Kennedy, and who's the Scot gal? Why can't I remember anything right now? The one who's very popular in America right now, the Scottish singer, a woman. Well we brought her to a university first too, why can't I think of her name? I'll think of it at another time, just watch. And then we got Doc Watson, Doc Watson first came to a university here, Doc Watson and Frank Proffitt. Frank Proffitt has been here twice, once by himself, and once with Mike Seeger. Well those were some pretty substantial people, because like the Chicago Folk Festival, many of those people would end up there at another particular time. And then I went down to interview Maybelle Carter with Archie, and so that was a weird thing. It felt weird to sit in the front room of Skrugg's home, interviewing Maybelle Carter with his recording equipment, while he's cooking steaks in the backyard. And then Lester Flatt came over, and as soon as we ate, we all went to the Grand Ole Opry and were sitting in the front row. And here's the part that I find most secret, was when Maybelle Carter revealed to Archie and me that June was going to marry Johnny Cash.

TW: Oh wow.

DM: It was like "They just decided, you're the first to know." And they had just recorded together, the "Golden Threads and Silver Bullets." They had just recorded that, and it had become very popular, so they were going to get married. You see, my involvement with Maybelle, do you know how to play the autoharp at all?

TW: No.

DM: Well, it sits on your lap, and you push down on a chord, and the chord dampens certain strings, and you strum the remaining strings in a big arpeggio. So, it would sort of be something like boom, cha, cha, boom rhythm, well Maybelle always played it on the table, and when she and her girls came to be Mother Maybelle and the Carter Sisters, you know, and she would get a table anywhere they played, and so she just started hoisting it up, and would get it up above and get it close to her. And my response to that was, alright, well it took Mike Seeger a really long time to understand, but finally he said you are right. But ergonomically, if you are brushing across this way, you move from here, and nothing very much moves here, so you're getting a different kind of stroke and you're exciting the strings in a different kind of way. If you're up here, and you do it all from here and not here, then you're getting another kind of a stroke, and you can go

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pitch, pitch, pitch, chucka, chucka, chucka and you begin to get rhythm and melody together and in a much freer way. So I said to Maybelle, play this song in the old way that you did, okay so it was liberty dance, you know so it was chinga, chinga... now hoist it up and play it the way you do now, and it was absolutely brilliant alive, just absolute magic. Again you see that it is really an ergonomic relationship of hand movement to stimulation of the strings, and that's the technique that everyone now plays the autoharp in. But I'll bet there aren't ten of them who are playing it these days that know that that's Maybelle Carter's technique. And no one else played it, not even her sister Sara who played a three-bar autoharp on flat. Yeah, it was Sara who played that, and Maybelle played the guitar. Oh, we're having a good rain.

TW: Yes, I saw that.

DM: We'll get you home dry, because we do need the rain. So I'm always interested, sometimes objectively, if the music is being played and subjectively because my whole business is communication. So I have to be able to analyze things from as many directions as possible and find a way of communicating information. So, I taught forty-five years, I taught graphic design. And in between all that, I am teaching Japanese aesthetics, and tea ceremony. So that's another thing that I do, but to me it's all the same. It's how things go together, so if it's music structure and it's oral and intuitive, then that's different from playing notes, and playing from notes, and note-structured music that follows systematic chord progressions and things. I mean folk music is the same systematic and it's the same renaissance form, but they only use three chords, four chords. A one chord, a three chord, a five chord, and a five-seven chord, that's all you can play and you can play forever. You can play anything that Steven Foster ever wrote with those four chords. So it doesn't become a matter of even making a decision, it's just you know how it's going to move and how it's going to play. So as a result, then, many people can play together who've never played together before, because all they know is this is where the music is taking me, I simply follow this. Or if there is something unusual then somebody will say, "Okay, we're going to slip this chord in here, as a transition to that one."

And my favorite was overhearing Maybelle Carter saying to Mike Seeger once in Chicago was, "Now, will you boys back me up on this song? Now, I'll have to be real careful because I'm liable to slip over any minute." That's what she called it, that's what she said. And what it was was that, let me think what the song was, I don't even remember the song, but what it was was instead of taking a 1, 2, 3, 4 beat, she would take a 1,2, and start right away, and so as she called it, she'd slip over. Oh yes, it was "Will the circle be unbroken?" [Singing and clapping] Will the circle be unbroken, by and by Lord, by and by. And she would do it this way: [Singing and clapping again] Will the circle be unbroken, by and by. And you'd way wait a minute, there's supposed to be two more beats in there, she would just keep going. And it doesn't hurt the song you see, because in the music that we're playing, it's accent, un-accent, accent, un-accent. It's not 1,2,3,4, it is, but it really and truly is just accent, un-accent. If you've ever gone to shape note singing, that's the way they sing. All you're getting is this, getting the arm wave

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accent, un-accent, and you just keep going as many as it takes to sing the song, which is a different manner of 1,2,3,4,1,2,3. You have to do the heavy accent on 1, and as a result from that you would get something like [singing] “Brethren we have met to worship, and to praise the Lord our God.” And you don’t know what that is, is it a 2-4, a 3-4, a 4-4? It’s not, it’s just up and down and up and down. So, as a result then, everybody who sings shape note can get up and lead, and it isn’t all this, it’s this, it’s funny, the hand is upside down when they’re directing, and they only direct it in this manner.

So, that becomes the manner of teaching people to sing, which is what the singing conventions were, shape notes, then that slips over into all of the music that they’re hearing, and they only hear it as accented and unaccented, and it doesn’t mean anything, so you can’t ask very many people complex questions about music. There isn’t any, and they wouldn’t know what a 5-7 chord was if you even described it as thoroughly as you could, but they use it all the time to get from this note to that note, and they don’t know why you slip in that funny chord, what is it, and why is it there? And then get all that mixed up with modal music, woo, I mean that even takes a good ethnomusicologist by surprise, because all of a sudden that becomes this very slippery way of producing a harmonic that is totally different than you’d expect, because you don’t hear recognitions, you only hear other things, but yet if that is your way of hearing the music and of playing it. There are some people who only tune their instruments in one way, and see that’s the confusion when you get people who are demonstrating their various ways, and they have to tune and retune, and they say ‘Well, this is the way my uncle used to play it, this is the way my grandpa played it.’ So they have to change it around, but the people they were learning it from only did it one way, and were not paying attention to a lot of other things. So the whole rich body of music becomes your own selection, you reject songs you don’t like, and you sing the ones that you do like over and over, and so it was always a personal aesthetic.

But I think that’s what the club did, was bring all this information, which you recognize as being an integral part of folk-transmitted stuff. You see, I always got very mad at folklorists who thought that they could take the same conditions, and discuss art, so that a folk artist, this is not a folk artists, who is doing it from a traditional perspective, you’ll let the music be a tradition, why won’t you let the art be a tradition? This is a folksinger who is making paintings, why can’t they be considered folk art? And I keep screaming ‘NO! The only folk artist that I could point to right now is somebody from Sweden doing rosemaling. That everyone knows how to do the exact same way to make rosemaling painted.’ That is a traditional art, that is a folk art. But just because she decides to get up and paint two horses drawing a sled, does not make them a folk artist, it makes them a naïve outsider. They’re trying to do something else, and they’re borrowing it from a tradition, rosemaling is a tradition. Quilling is a tradition, but I could never quite get them to understand that.

TW: So you see a distinction between folk and traditional then? Traditional is anything that is drawn from a continual tradition, whereas folk is what?

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DM: Well, but folk no, they're the same. You do draw from a tradition, but if you are a folk, then you are a manipulator of your tradition. And if you are not, then you are a translator or an imitator or something else because you are doing it because of an intellectual reason of wanting to sing this song or liking this song, or whatever it is. However, then you have to be very very careful because maybe the tradition of singing in the home is the tradition and not the song. So that the act of what you're doing is carrying on, although it may be a song that was learned the day before yesterday. Maybe it's the fact that, "Oh, we always sing before supper" or something like that. You follow the methodology that is of your environment's making. But then to all of a sudden feel that everything you do is a folk expression, that's absolutely not there at all, because that isn't what it is. So that was where, as I said, where we always laughed at the is this a singer of folksongs or a folksinger, because the folksinger can drag a song into his own tradition, and sing it in a traditional manner, and really like it, and recognize it as a traditional way of singing. Norman Kennedy and I used to go up to Nova Scotia, and he had many friends up in Nova Scotia, and the Scots and they said they sang and spoke Gaelic. And they absolutely loved it that we did line-singing, like the Alabama Line Singing, you know, because it is exactly like the We Free Scots Precenting. So they would ask us to sing these Alabama songs to them, and they would hear them as traditional precenting. So, you can take an aesthetic and pull it over here, and appreciate it. Do you know line singing?

TW: Sure I do.

DM: [singing] Amazing grace how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me, I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see.

TW: So, does it help with audience participation?

DM: Well, there's a singer who's a leader. And the leader is the one who's sending it all out while everyone else sings along, but then in that tiny space, the leader then will sing it, and that can only come from books, with no notes. It's different from the shape note singing, I would show you the book but I gave it away, of just the words, but the words have a name above it to tell you what the tune is. And so you have one person who is literate, and can read or remember, or you know learn and remember and then sing from line singing. Or someone recites a line and then you sing it, and they recite another line and then you sing it, that's exactly what Presbyterian Precenting is. They do hymns and psalms, singing psalms that way. And so they like that sort of whiney sort of moaning, and you do slip into that sort of strange, well you aren't singing from your diaphragm and you aren't singing from your throat, you all of a sudden are singing in another voice which you may never ever hear in another way except that way. And then it's got those hooks and feathers on it, and they become a part of that tradition, and the doing it or not doing it, all those variations in people, all of a sudden, you're doing something that's not me right now, you're doing something that comes from over there, and it invades you. I think that's the thing that I like, I think it's probably the way that we dealt with our

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music, was that we're hearing something that you're hearing it as a note out of the past, and we want to revere that distance. And I think it's funny that maybe why I said that sometimes we pronounce the words rather peculiarly, that maybe we'll take a country and western form, but it may also be something else that's happening. It sounded right, you made it fit, and you don't program it. That's why I still don't know why that crazy harmony that I put in that one song and only song do I remember doing that, that much. Well, it's a lot of stuff.

TW: Yeah, one other thing that I am wondering about is do you think the political climate of the 1960s had an impact on the club and how its members perceived themselves?

DM: No, absolutely not, because that was never a subject for discussion, that was never a subject that was presented. We sort of put a king's X on anything like that, what it really was was we all understood about protest songs, but we never, I never sang a protest song, and we were not particularly interested in protest singers, that's not very interesting. See, they've got a cause, and they're pushing something more than just the aesthetic togetherness of singing. So, no, I think that the folksong club was completely devoid of that, but again through Archie's influence, we were aware of the value of the ballads and things that were made and sung by the people who were part of the Wobbly culture and who were part of the union, and all that that people were aware of that had significance. Many of those heroes would be singing protest songs for a real reason rather than entertainment. As a group, we were not particularly attracted to getting up and making a spectacle of yourself by preaching, that just wasn't a part of it. And I don't recall anyone in the folksong club who did anything like that, maybe once in a while somebody in the club would do a Bob Dylan song, but was never appreciated. It was tolerated, but never appreciated. So no, there was never any political climate, and what there was, again through Archie's influence, there was an awareness of civility and making sure things are taken care of and worked right, rather than getting up and poking sticks at people. I mean we would listen to what he'd have to say about the coal miners, and the tragedy of the coal miners, but see they said that in their song, and it was very strong. They were approaching it from the inside rather than the outside, and that just makes a difference. It's about you, not at you.

TW: How would you describe the impact that the club had on you then and later?

DM: An impact? I enjoyed the camaraderie of singing with people, and I would refuse to show up somewhere to sing. None of my friends hardly ever heard anything I ever sang, I wouldn't sing it for them, mainly because they were so interested in so many different things, they would get to talking, and not listen to the music so I said, 'To hell with it.' I'm not going to sing for you and give you this information if you're not gonna hear it. So I never discussed that very much, but the impact was we felt as a group that we enjoyed it, we would play for people's enjoyment, but we would never force anyone to listen to what we were singing. That would be an answer to that question.

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TW: Well, that's all the questions I have. Is there anything else that we didn't touch on that you would like to include?

DM: Well, toward what end?

TW: Well, just in terms of your club or the group.

DM: I just think it was the biggest surprise in the whole world that that thing worked. There was no other organization on the campus that was anywhere near that big, and it was not a vehicle for hidden agendas. You came to the folksong club to hear the music and to enjoy the music you were listening to, and maybe ponder it, and learn some things about the music you were listening to. I had never thought about the political agenda there, there just was not one, it just never came up. Because there was a different function for what we were doing rather than making your point so self-important.

TW: So, why do you think it worked?

DM: I am going to give you an answer that I liked best of all, I always laughed at this. I loved when Loretta Lynn was on Johnny Carson, and Johnny Carson would stop by her every time, "Now, why is it you like this music?" and her answer every time was, "Because it's true." And that's it, all of it was true, so it wasn't artificial, and it wasn't pretend, it wasn't hiding behind something, it was all right out in front of you and it was true. So I think that that's why it was very successful, but then of course it's because many of the formulators went away, it lacked a core, although many things would happen for as long as they possibly could, but I'm trying to think of one of the last things that we did. Oh, the Balfa Brothers were here, and I get all emotional, because here's Ralph and Carter Stanley before they died, and I had to introduce them, and I was choking up. And everybody would say, 'What are you choking up for?' and I would say, "Don't you know who these guys are? You know, they're important, they're very important, and I'm standing here in front of them, taking up this time. And I'm so excited that they're here, because I would never have a chance to go somewhere and hear them, and they came here." I remember the Balfa Brothers and the Carter, Ralph Carter, Stanley, and who else, Bill Monroe never came, and I am not certain why. We would see Bill Monroe in Indiana, but he was never on this sort of circuit. But I think yes, the plain simplicity of truth, because you would sing about things, but they were all things that you could empathize with. That weren't artificial and you could develop an empathy, especially if they had some historic, well because it was folk music, it does have a history and a prominence, you're dealing with a whole lot of moments in time. And I think that was an interesting alliance, and it had a lot to do with intellect and emotion.

TW: It's interesting to me, that regarding the political climate of the sixties, how different people answer that question, it's just so far, you're about the fifth person I've talked to, and some people say, no absolutely, no role, and other people say yes

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absolutely. I think it gets down to what you interpret the limits of what is political. Some people say, oh, this made us more aware of the civil rights movement, and that made us more aware of marginal groups and their cultures and these connections that some people made.

DM: Well, but they were independent of the folksong club. Yeah, no we had conviction, and we had political conviction, and yes, all of the strife and such, that's here. And this was strictly an aesthetic thing that did not enter into your political conviction. We were no less aware of it, but it was never extolled or expressed as a device.

TW: Something that Judy McCulloh mentioned was that in her mind the club was a really strong democratizing force in bringing people from different backgrounds like bringing local people on to campus. Like, that's another way to think about it.

DM: Oh yes, oh yes, but then what happened is, it sort of became homogenous, what are you now if you've got this and this and that and that and that. So yeah, it was a means of allowing yourself into places that you would never be, or hear things that you would never hear, do things that you would never do. It built a lot of awareness, I think. It did make you defend your point of view is what it was, rather than going along with.

TW: I'm taking up a lot of your time.

DM: No, I'm not teaching now in the summer, except Monday nights when I go to tea ceremony.

TW: Every week?

DM: Uh-huh. Since 1964.